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FLOOR DEBATE

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followed by Senator Aguilar.

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, yesterday I tried to explain quite poorly my concern for the underlying bill, LB 689, and I was concerned about a rush to judgment to spend \$24 million or \$30 million, whatever it might be, to replace a technology and, through no fault of anyone else in the Chamber, the technology itself is difficult to understand. So I took some time and I spoke to some industry-type folks to better understand what's going on, and in a very simplistic manner, I can just explain that Senator Raikes was talking about a JPEG technology, which is communicating between schools, and that, as you've heard, is obsolete. Although we have a wonderful network and it works reasonably well, the JPEG technology is something that was discontinued years ago, three or four or five years ago, three or four years ago, and what's going on now is called MPEG. Doesn't mean anything to me; probably doesn't mean much to you either. What did mean something to me was from a technical perspective. Those providers that are maintaining this network and being paid by the state of Nebraska can no longer get parts to maintain this JPEG technology. It is obsolete. I was told that the vendors are going on-line on eBay to buy these parts from all over the country, and even many of those parts that they get don't work. So, from a practical standpoint, I think that this body needs to authorize Senator Raikes' proposal and Senator Stuhr's bill to evaluate what we need to do next, and if that's going to cost us \$10,000, well, that's fine. I don't think at this time...and I agree with Senator Beutler and Chambers that we really shouldn't authorize a spending amount now for...to pay for that technology. Let's do that once...we can issue the request for proposal once we understand what we need. Then we can make those assumptions next year, even though Senator Pederson has indicated we don't have any money any way you look at this issue. I also tried, not very well, to explain how I don't understand distance learning and how it works. I understand that the rural communities in Nebraska utilize distance learning. My district certainly has it, but I don't understand how we use it. I don't know that we use it very much. And I appreciate the discussion and I'm learning quite a bit from the interaction and the discussion on, are we delivering excellence in education via